



State of Utah

Department of Natural Resources

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June 11, 2004

TO: File

FROM: Paul Baker, Senior Reclamation Biologist 

SUBJECT: Site Inspection, Geokinetics, Seep Ridge Mine, M/047/002, Uintah County, Utah

Date of Inspection: May 20, 2004
Time of Inspection: 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Conditions: Cloudy, breezy, 60's
Participants: Paul Baker, DOGM

Purpose of Inspection:

I wanted to check the vegetation to see how close it was to meeting bond release criteria.

Observations:

Prior to going to the site, I used an aerial photo of the mine to select 20 locations where I would take vegetation measurements (I actually took samples from 21 places). These were scattered fairly evenly over the site; the locations were not strictly random. There was a potential to sample any point within the disturbed area. Using the photo and the scale, I was able to go to the preselected points without much difficulty.

I did not use preselected points for the undisturbed area. Rather, I walked through undisturbed pinyon/juniper and sagebrush/grass areas near the trailer park and took 20 samples.

The values I obtained for the reclaimed area were 23.0 percent cover from perennials, 13.9 percent annuals and other weeds (bindweed was the only non-annual), 8.7 percent litter, and 54.4 percent bare. The dominant perennial species were Russian wild rye, western wheatgrass, and rubber rabbitbrush, and the most commonly encountered annuals were cheatgrass and kochia.

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In the undisturbed area, I only measured cover from perennials. I did not differentiate between species and did not measure litter or bare ground. Cover from perennials was 23.7 percent. There were very few weeds.

Conditions at the site were essentially the same as when I visited last fall. There is a culvert that still needs to be removed. The pump was running at the well.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Perennial cover in the reclaimed area is very similar to what I found in the undisturbed area and meets the criteria for bond release. The reclaimed area clearly has places where weeds are dominant and other areas where there is very little vegetation. Some of these were encountered in the sampling, but the average over the site is about the same as the undisturbed area.

The main issues that need to be resolved before bond release are ownership and reclamation of the wells. The last two inspection reports have also discussed a culvert that was damaged when certain areas were being ripped, and this culvert still needs to be removed.

In addition to these items, the site should be cleaned up before bond is released. I have not previously mentioned this, and while there's not a lot of trash, it just makes the site look messy.

PBB:jb

cc: John Blake, SITLA

Mickey Schott, Geokinetics

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